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SUBJECT: GEORGIA -- GUIDANCE FOR POSSIBLE UNSC EMERGENCY
SESSION ON GEORGIA, AUGUST 28, 2008

¶1. The Department understands that Georgia may ask for an emergency UNSC session as early as tomorrow in light of the Russian Federation's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on August 26. If the UNSC does meet to discuss Georgia on August 28, the Department requests that USUN draw on the following points in making its statement.

¶2. Begin Points:

Mr. President:

The Council is convening for the eighth time in emergency session to consider the situation in Georgia since the outbreak of hostilities on August 7. During this time, members of this Council and other leading members of the international community have worked in good faith to reach agreement on a cease fire aimed at saving lives, to prevent the unnecessary destruction of property, and to avoid the creation of a new wave of internally displaced persons and a resulting humanitarian catastrophe. At the same time, members of this Council have in good faith worked diligently to reach agreement on a Security Council resolution that would provide a foundation for a lasting solution to the underlying internal instability in Georgia.

Over the course of our eight meetings, a significant number of Council members, supported by leading members of the international community, have voiced a consensus view that we must work toward a solution that is consistent with international law and the UN charter, and respects Georgia's territorial integrity, the rights of internally displaced persons, and other principles set out in Security Council resolutions, and previous international agreements on Georgia.

During this time the Russian Federation has stood apart from this consensus and offered justifications for its actions that are clearly at odds with the reality of the situation. While claiming to have acted in a manner consistent with their role as quote "peacekeepers" in South Ossetia, since the very first hours of the crisis, Russia's actions have betrayed its true motivations, which go completely beyond any role Russia might have exercised as an impartial peacekeeper in the region.

The Russian Federation's actions in fact served only to widen the conflict well beyond its origins in Tshkinvali and its environs. The Russian Federation deliberately opened a second front in Abkhazia completely unconnected to the original conflict, restricted free access to the port of Poti, Georgia's economic lifeline, and carried out wholly unjustified attacks and military operations in Georgian territory well outside South Ossetia and Abkhazia that constitute a gross violation of Georgia's sovereignty

and territorial integrity, and appeared designed solely to cripple the Georgian state and imperil its democratically elected government.

Moreover, after President Medvedev freely entered into an agreement negotiated by the President of France, the Russian Federation inexplicably chose not to live up to its commitments spelled out in that agreement, exacerbating the crisis, contravening the express wishes of the majority of Council members, and all the while inflicting further unjustifiable damage on the Georgian state and its people.

The Russian Federation's actions have also had the effect of creating a virtual embargo on reliable information from South Ossetia and the rest of the conflict zone. Russian officials were quick to claim that they were responding to a "genocide" involving the deaths of thousands of civilians and that Georgian forces had effectively wiped Tshkinvali from the map. From the scant information the international community has been able to gather from impartial observers, principally from international human rights organizations, we have good reason to question the Russian account, and compelling reasons to examine what human rights abuses have occurred in Georgian territory under the control of Russian Federation forces. This Council must also have an impartial and accurate account

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of the number of internally displaced persons created by this conflict, not only in the conflict zone of South Ossetia, but also in Abkhazia.

The Russian Federation's actions culminated on August 26 with its recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. With its actions, the Russian Federation has raised very serious questions about the purpose of its long-standing strategy in dealing with Georgia and its aims since this crisis first began on August 7.

Let me here reiterate President Bush's statement of August 26 in response to the Russian Federation's actions. We condemn its decision to recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states. This decision is inconsistent with numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions that Russia has voted for in the past, and is also inconsistent with the French-brokered cease-fire that President Medvedev signed on August 16. The six-point agreement offered a peaceful way forward to resolve the conflict. We expect Russia to live up to its international commitments, reconsider this irresponsible decision, and follow the approach set out in the six-point agreement.

Among the numerous other leaders that have joined with President Bush, the members of the G-7 yesterday took the unprecedented step of jointly condemning the Russian Federation's recognitions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Colleagues:

The practical question now arises, more urgently than ever before, of how this Council can meet its responsibilities to contribute to a peaceful and lasting solution to this crisis when one of its permanent members is a party to the conflict.

Let me highlight the United States' desire to work with all Council members, including Russia, to reach agreement on a resolution that will serve the interests of peace and uphold the principles of international law set out in this Council's previous resolutions on Georgia. Consistent with the French-brokered agreement, the United States is fully prepared to consider the legitimate security and stability concerns of all parties to the conflict, including the Russian Federation. The United States

welcomes the commitment of the OSCE leadership and member states to contribute additional personnel and resources to its monitoring mission and believes the OSCE mission should serve as the international mechanism called for in the six-point agreement. We must, however, move forward in a manner that fully upholds the principles set out in previous resolutions on Georgia.

Let me be clear about the most important of these principles. Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be preserved. Its borders cannot be changed by force: not by the Russian Federation or anyone else. South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain a part of Georgia. The rights of internally displaced persons from the conflict zones must also be preserved. In particular, the Russian Federation's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia must not in any way compromise the rights of Georgian citizens who retain their rights as residents of either South Ossetia or Abkhazia.

If this Council is unable to agree in the near term on a solution that preserves these principles and contributes to a lasting settlement, Council members, at the very least, should reaffirm their own commitment to respect Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, one of the core protections the UN charter grants to member states that this Council is obligated to uphold. The United States is convinced that these important reaffirmations will lay the foundation for a lasting resolution of the current crisis over the longer term.

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